



BASIC EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COURSE



Course Overview

The goal of this course is to provide you with a way to learn, practice, and demonstrate the core competencies for public health emergency preparedness.

At the end of the online portion of this course, you will have an understanding of the core competencies for public health emergency preparedness.

The content of this course is based upon the Emergency Preparedness Core Competencies for All Public Health Workers. These competencies are listed on the next page.

Emergency Preparedness Core Competencies:

To be competent for public health emergency preparedness and response, all public health workers must be able to:

- DESCRIBE the role of Public Health in emergency response
- IDENTIFY & LOCATE the agency emergency plan
- DESCRIBE the agency Chain of Command
- DESCRIBE & DEMONSTRATE one's functional emergency response role
- RECOGNIZE deviations from the norm
- IDENTIFY limits to one's own authority
- DESCRIBE communication roles during emergency response
- DEMONSTRATE use of communication equipment
- APPLY creative problem solving skills

The remainder of this course will review each of these competencies in greater detail.



Throughout the course, this symbol indicates that the text is focusing on one of the core competencies.

Chapter 1: The Role of Public Health in Emergency Preparedness



What is your role?

Imagine that you are at work at your department of health on a Friday afternoon. You have just received a call from one of the local hospitals that they have just treated 25 cases of diarrheal illness in their emergency rooms in the past 4 hours. OR you hear on the radio that there is a forecast for rain for the entire weekend, and that major flooding in your county is expected.

For each of these situations in your department of health, what would you be expected to do?

- Who would you call?
- What would your agency most likely do?
- What would your role most likely be?

All of these questions require an understanding of basic emergency preparedness. This online course will focus on helping you answer these questions and provide you with an understanding of what every individual who works in public health needs to know in order to respond to emergency situations.



Emergency Response is a Public Health Activity:

Public health every day...

1. Prevents epidemics and the spread of disease
2. Protects against environmental hazards
3. Works to prevent injuries
4. Promotes and encourages healthy behaviors
5. Assures the quality and accessibility of health services
6. Responds to disasters and assists communities
7. in recovery



You can see that emergency response is a routine function of public health.

(The Public Health Functions Steering Committee, pg 21, July 1995)

Each public health department is an emergency response agency.

Emergencies and disasters can occur during any time of the day. Public health workers must be prepared to respond immediately.

It works with many other agencies to detect and respond to situations that may impact the community. Some of the agencies that are incorporated within the public health system during emergencies and disasters are:

- American Red Cross
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Fire department
- Police
- EMS
- School systems
- Transit systems
- Local businesses (e.g. restaurants)



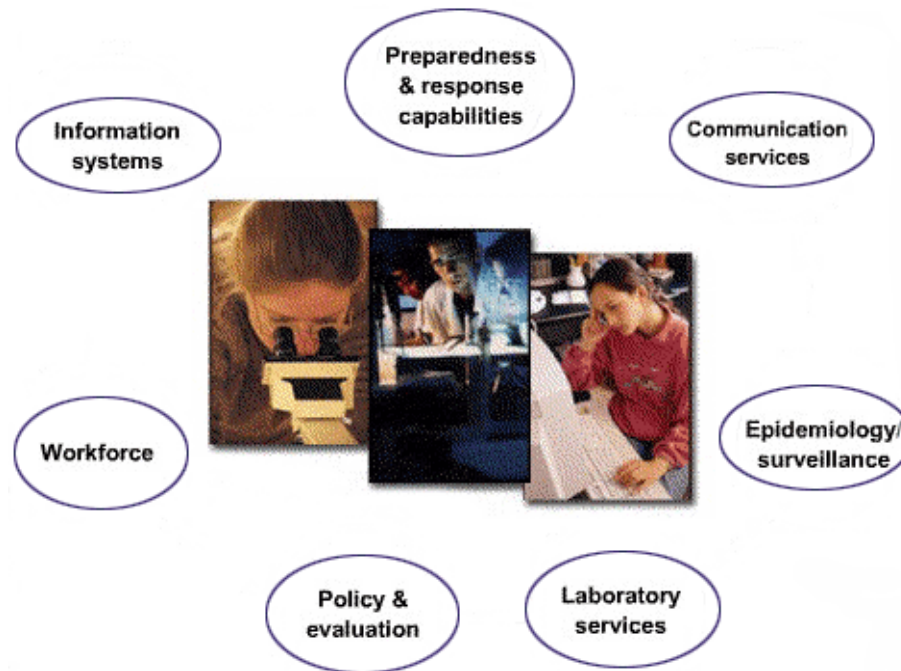
Public health employees must be able to report to work on a 24/7 basis.

System Capacities for Public Health Emergency Preparedness

System capacities + competent employees + an emergency response plan = public health preparedness

In order for public health employees to respond during emergencies, core system capacities must be in place. Capacity is achieved by having the service in the local public health agency or through an agreement with a supporting regional or state partner.

The 7 Core System Capacities for public health are listed below.



Communication Services:

Public Health Systems maintain communication mechanisms to communicate accurate, honest, and timely information. This is accomplished by:

- Use of the Health Alert Network (HAN) The HAN is a nationwide, integrated information and communications system serving as a platform for distribution of health alerts, dissemination of prevention guidelines, distance learning, national disease surveillance, and electronic laboratory reporting. It is also intended to strengthen the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's bioterrorism and related preparedness initiatives at the local and state levels.
- Routinely translating scientific and health information for communities and policy makers
- Provision of timely, accurate public information and advice to policy makers during emergency events
- Coordination of logistical communication within the response community

Epidemiology / Surveillance

Public health uses epidemiology and surveillance activities to detect changes or patterns of health in the community and to identify the causes of such changes. Early detection is essential to identify and control epidemics.

This is done through the use of formal and informal surveillance systems.

Examples of formal surveillance systems are:

- Case reporting by community clinicians
- Case reporting by hospitals
- Tracking and reporting of volume and complaints for emergency rooms
- Tracking and reporting of EMS volume and call types
- Pharmacy reporting of volume and type of drugs sold (over the counter and prescription)

Monitoring disease patterns in the community.

Diseases that are commonly monitored are:

- Gastro-intestinal diseases
- Fever and flu-like illnesses

Do you know which diseases your department of health monitors?

Many diseases are monitored via the CDC's [Morbidity and Mortality](#) weekly report (MMWR)

Note: This is an external document that will open in a new window. (To return to this course, click on the X in the upper right hand corner of the other browser).

The MMWR weekly contains data on specific diseases as reported by state and territorial health departments and reports on infectious and chronic diseases, environmental hazards, natural or human-generated disasters, occupational diseases and injuries, and intentional and unintentional injuries. Also included are reports on topics of international interest and notices of events of interest to the public health community.

Examples of informal surveillance systems include:

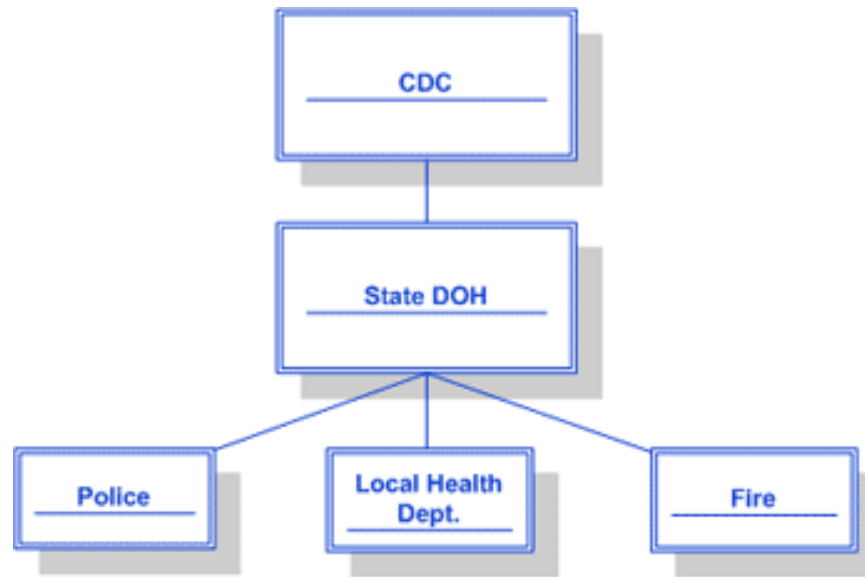
- A situation in which someone in the health department notices something unusual and reports it to the DOH.
- A situation in which someone in the community notices something unusual and reports it to the DOH.

Both types of systems are essential for early detection of diseases.

Information Systems:

Public Health Systems establish and maintain secure accessible Information Systems for rapid communication, analysis and interpretation of health data, and public access to health information.

There needs to be an ability to interface Information Systems between LHDs (Local Health Departments), the regional and state health departments, and the community.



Laboratory Services

Public health departments use laboratories to identify organisms and environmental agents, which impact the health of the public. All local health departments should have an agreement with a supporting regional or state partner for provision of the functions that they do not have.

For those local health departments that lack onsite laboratory service, referral agreements must be established in advance.

Specialized lab testing is usually done in bio-safety labs at the state level or by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

* More information about BioSafety Lab Criteria can be found in the "Links" section of this course.

Policy and Evaluation

Public health departments develop policies and regulations and assist with formulating public health law. This is done to be sure that the health of the public is protected.

Examples of public health policy:

- limits on areas where people can smoke
- immunization requirements for school children
- establishment of water quality standards
- powers to enforce quarantine or isolation to control epidemics

Preparedness and Response Capabilities

Public health departments always maintain the capacity to prepare and respond to emergencies. This is done through having:

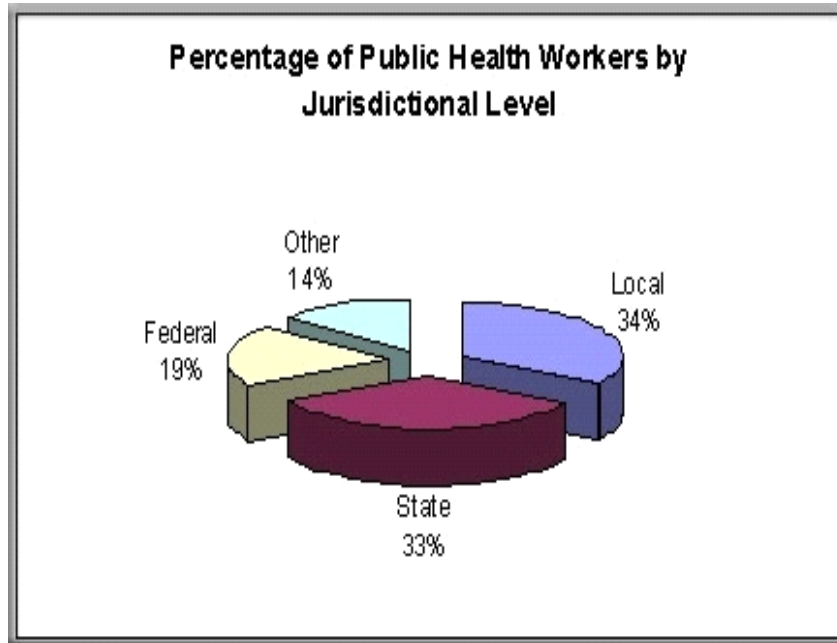
- system capacities
- competent workforce
- defined and practiced emergency preparedness plan

* A link to the ["Dark Winter"](#) public health emergency preparedness exercise can be found [here](#).

Note: This is an external PDF document that will open in a new window. (To return to this course, click on the X in the upper right hand corner of the other browser).

Workforce

The public health system maintains a public health workforce of 488,000 people capable of delivering the Essential Public Health Services during routine as well as emergency operations. Each person in the workforce must be competent to perform their job.



The Essential Services of Public Health: Monitor health status

- Inform and empower people
- Develop policies and plans
- Link people to health services
- Evaluate quality
- Diagnose health problems
- Mobilize community partnerships
- Enforce laws and regulations
- Assure a competent workforce
- Research for new insights

You can click on this [Essential Services for Public Health](#) link to get more information.

Note: This is an external document that will open in a new window. (To return to this course, click on the X in the upper right hand corner of the other browser).

Competency - Definition

What does the term competency mean to you?

A competency is a combination of knowledge, skills and abilities demonstrated by organization members that are critical to the effective and efficient function of the organization. (Center for Public Health Practice, Emory University, 1997)

In other words, competency means you will be able to perform the tasks or things needed to be done for your role in the organization.

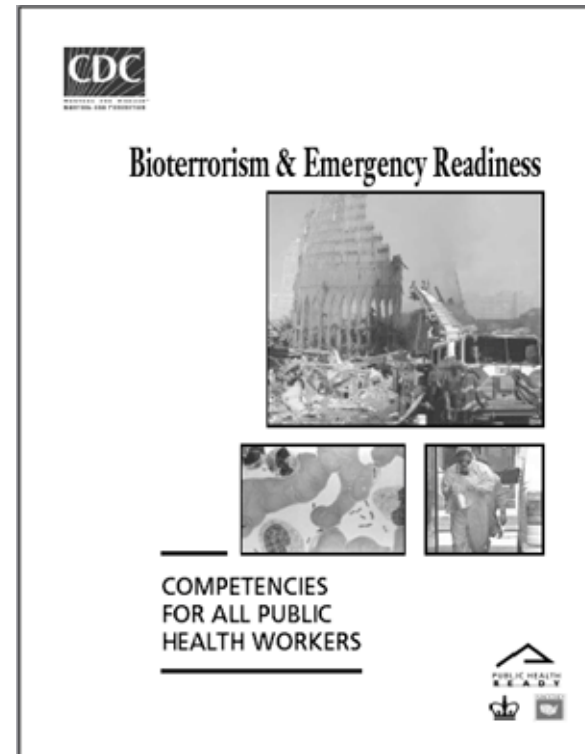


The Core Emergency Preparedness Competencies for Public Health Workers:

To be competent for public health emergency preparedness and response, all public health workers must be able to:

1. DESCRIBE the role of Public Health in emergency response
2. IDENTIFY & LOCATE the agency emergency plan
3. DESCRIBE the agency Chain of Command
4. DESCRIBE & DEMONSTRATE one's functional emergency response role
5. RECOGNIZE deviations from the norm
6. IDENTIFY limits to one's own authority
7. DESCRIBE communication roles during emergency response
8. DEMONSTRATE use of communication equipment
9. APPLY creative problem solving skills

There are approximately 488,000 public health workers in the United States today. **Every public health worker must be competent in emergency preparedness.**



The remainder of this course will review each of these competencies in greater detail.

Chapter 2: Emergencies and Disasters





"Describe the public health role in emergency response in a range of emergencies that might arise."

What is the difference between an emergency and a disaster?

Emergencies and disasters both require a rapid reallocation of resources. An emergency can be handled by allocating existing agency resources while a disaster requires use of additional resources from other outside agencies.

What is considered a disaster for one small department of health may be only an emergency for a larger agency. Each department of health needs to know when to activate its emergency plan and when its resource limits have been exceeded.

Emergencies and disasters are situations classified as being natural or human made.



What types of situations would be an emergency for your department of health?

Can you think of some situations that would be a disaster for your department?

There are generally two types of emergencies or disasters, but both can pose a serious threat to the health of the public.

Natural emergencies or disasters are ecological disruptions that exceed the ability of the community to adjust. They are usually of sudden onset (although some weather emergencies can be predicted).

Human-made: Adverse situations or disruptions which are clearly caused by humans.



Emergencies and disasters can be classified as natural or human made

Natural Disasters



Flooding displaces populations, and has the potential to affect water, food, and sanitation systems.



Environmental disasters disrupt utility and transportation systems, and further stress the vulnerable.



Fires can displace entire communities.

Emergencies and disasters can be classified as natural or human made

Human-Made Disasters



Major disasters affect entire communities.



Transportation accidents can turn into haz-mat incidents.



Biological and chemical terrorism can adversely affect entire populations

Natural and human-made disasters can cause similar problems

Natural and human-made disasters may both cause similar problems for the community. For example, a flood as well as a bio-terrorist incident may cause contamination of the water supply, with a resulting epidemic of diarrheal illness.



Chapter 3: Response Plans



Columbia University
MAILMAN SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC HEALTH



"Identify and locate the emergency response plan for your department of health."

For effective public health preparedness, each department of health must have an emergency response plan AND each public health employee must have a:

1. Family emergency plan
2. Personal emergency plan



Department of Health Emergency Response Plan

Your department of health emergency response plan is a template for how your agency will operate during emergency response.

The plan should be:

- In an accessible location at work
- Reviewed by each employee on a regular basis
- Updated at least annually
- Practiced regularly

Many agencies are in the process of updating and revising their plans. If your agency doesn't have a complete plan today, your supervisor should be able to give you an outline of where to go and what to do in an emergency.

Plans can be practiced in many different ways, including:

- Review of the agency's response during an actual emergency
- Table top drills
- Simulation exercises

All of these are effective methods to identify emergency plan strengths as well as problems that need to be addressed.



Public Health Employee Family Disaster Plan:

A family disaster plan provides an outline for your family to assist with disaster situations which your family may encounter. If you do not have one, or would like to find out more information, you can access [FEMA's checklist by clicking here](#). This is an external document. (To return to this course, click on the X in the upper right hand corner of the other browser).



Public Health Employee Personal Emergency Plan:

[Print Page](#)

You or any individual should have a plan in place so that you can be sure that family, pets, and / or elder care obligations are met in the event you need to report to work during a disaster.

The following is an example of the type of plan you should have ready:

In the event that I am called upon to respond to an emergency as a Department of Health employee, I,

, have made the following arrangements to ensure that my family and pets are cared for while I am on duty:



My children will be cared for by:

Name:

Phone:



My parents will be cared for by:

Name:

Phone:



My pets will be cared for by:

Name:

Phone:

Chapter 4: Chain of Command





"Describe your agency's chain of command in emergency response"

Incident command provides a framework for the chain of command for emergency response. The chain of command is expanded or contracted based upon the nature and extent of the event. An individual's role within the chain of command is usually described in a "job action sheet," also known as a "JAS." The chart below provides a sample of an incident command structure "ICS" organization tree.



[Click here for an example of a full ICS, including the planning, operations, logistics and administration sections, with more than 80 job action sheets.](#) This is an external document. (To return to this course, click on the X in the upper right hand corner of the other browser).

INCIDENT COMMANDER

Mission: Organize and direct the Incident Command Post (or Emergency Operations Center). Provide direction for overall emergency response.

Immediate:

- Read this entire job action sheet
- Obtain a full briefing regarding the incident (or report from off going IC)
- Decide upon which Command Positions and Sections are to activated
- Appoint a person to be responsible for maintaining essential day to day services
- Assure that all relevant staff is notified to report to the Incident Command Post
- Confer with staff and develop an incident action plan (IAP) for a defined period of time, establishing priorities (Section Chiefs will communicate IAP to each section)
- Consider communication requirements with: agency staff (up and down the chain of command) , external agencies, public and media
- Assure that contact and resource information has been established with relevant external agencies including State Office of Emergency Management

Intermediate:

- Authorize resources as needed or requested by Section Chiefs
- Schedule and conduct routine status report meetings with Section Chiefs and Command Post Staff
- Maintain contact with State Office of Emergency Management

Extended:

- Assure safety of staff
- Prepare end of shift report and deliver to oncoming IC

**EXAMPLE: Department of Health
ICS Job Action Sheet**

[Print Page](#)

FINANCE / ADMINISTRATION SECTION CHIEF

You report to: Incident Commander

Mission: The Finance / Administration Section is responsible for monitoring and documenting the resources expended during the incident, and authorizing large expenditures to carry out the Incident Action Plan (IAP).

Immediate:

- Read this entire job action sheet and review Common Responsibilities sheet
- Obtain a full briefing regarding the incident (or report from off going Planning Section Chief)
- Brief and assign Finance / Administration Section personnel in accordance with Incident Action Plan

Intermediate:

- Develop a "cost to date" report on a routine basis
- Provide input regarding Human Resource Policies and procedures relevant to the incident
- Authorize utilization or diversion of financial resources
- Act on requirements to address barriers for employees reporting to duty (e.g. child care, transportation, shift assignment, etc)

Extended:

- Participate in planning meetings, providing current information
- Prepare end of shift report and deliver to oncoming Finance / Administration Chief

**EXAMPLE: Department of Health
Job Action Sheet**

[Print Page](#)

INFORMATION OFFICER

Reports to: Incident Commander

Mission: The Information Officer is responsible for developing and releasing information about the incident to the news media, incident personnel, other appropriate agencies and organizations and the community. Only one Information Officer will be assigned for each incident, including incidents operating under Unified Command and multi-jurisdiction incidents. The Information Officer may have assistants as necessary, and the assistants may also represent assisting agencies or jurisdictions.

Departments of Health have different policies and procedures relative to the handling of public information. The following are the major responsibilities of the Information Officer which would generally apply on any incident:

Immediate:

- Read this entire job action sheet and review Common Responsibilities sheet
- Obtain a full briefing regarding the incident (or report from off going Information Officer)
- Participate in planning meetings and review the Incident Action Plan for information implications
- Determine from the Incident Commander if there are any limits on information release

Intermediate:

- Obtain Incident Commander's approval of media releases
- Inform media and conduct media briefings
- Arrange for interviews or briefings that may be required
- Obtain media information that may be useful to incident planning
- Develop material for use in media briefings

Extended:

- Prepare end of shift report and deliver to oncoming Information Officer

**EXAMPLE: Department of Health
Job Action Sheet**

[Print Page](#)

LOGISTICS SECTION CHIEF

You report to: Incident Commander

Logistics Command Center: Telephone number: _____

Mission: The Logistics Section is responsible for providing facilities, personnel, services, and material in support of the incident action plan objectives.

1. Identify Logistics service and support requirements for planned and expected mission/objectives
2. Coordinate and process requests for additional resources
3. Advise IC on current Logistical service and support capabilities
4. Identify & develop Logistics service and support elements of the Incident Action Plan
5. Estimate future service and support requirements
6. Communicate Service & support elements of IAP to Deputy Section Chief
7. Receive Demobilization Plan from Planning Section
8. Recommend to IC release of Logistics unit resources in conformity with Demobilization Plan
9. Ensure general welfare and safety of Logistics Section personnel through evaluation of conditions and assignments
10. Forward completed Unit/Activity Log to IC and Planning (PHICS Form 214)

Immediate:

- Read this entire job action sheet and review Common Responsibilities sheet
- Obtain a full briefing regarding the incident (or report from off going Logistics Section Chief), and identify what resources are needed by the Operations Section and other responding units
- Brief and assign Logistics Section personnel in accordance with identified resource needs

Intermediate:

- Supervise Operations Section
- Review Incident Action Plan and estimate section needs for next operational period
- Initiate procurement and dispatch of resources to carry out activities of Incident Action Plan to meet incident objectives
- Triage allocation of resources, consulting with the Incident Commander where there are competing needs for resources
- Participate with Incident Commander, Planning Section Chief, Operation Section Chief in preparation of Incident Action Plan

Extended:

- Participate in planning meetings, providing current resource status, including limitations and capability of assisting agency resources
- Prepare end of shift report and deliver to oncoming Logistics Section Chief

**EXAMPLE: Department of Health
Job Action Sheet**

[Print Page](#)

LIAISON OFFICER

Reports to: Incident Commander

Mission: Responsible for coordinating communication with personnel assigned to the incident by assisting or cooperating agencies. Is the contact point for external agencies.

Immediate:

- Read this entire job action sheet
- Obtain a full briefing regarding the incident (or report from off going Liaison Officer)
- Assure that contact and resource information has been established with relevant external agencies including State Office of Emergency Management

Intermediate:

- Maintain a list of assisting and cooperating agencies and agency representatives
- Keep agencies supporting the incident aware of incident status
- Monitor incident operations to identify current or potential inter-organizational problems
- Participate in planning meetings, providing current resource status, including limitations and capability of assisting agency resources

Extended:

- Prepare end of shift report and deliver to oncoming Liaison Officer

OPERATIONS SECTION CHIEF

You report to: Incident Commander

Operations Command Center: Telephone number: _____

Mission: The Operations Section carries out those activities that are required to fulfill the public health mission for the incident. (e.g. surveillance, risk communication, mass distribution programs, operation of shelters). The Operations Section Chief is responsible for the management of all operations of the section. He/she activates the units that are required to achieve the goals of Incident Action Plan and directs its implementation. The Operations Chief also directs the preparation of specific unit operational plans, requests or releases resources and makes expedient changes to the Operations portion of Incident Action Plan as necessary; and immediately reports such to the Incident Commander.

Immediate:

- Read this entire job action sheet and review Common Responsibilities sheet
- Obtain a full briefing regarding the incident (or report from off going Operations Chief)
- Develop next shift Operations Section portion of Incident Action Plan
- Brief and assign Operations Section personnel in accordance with Incident Action Plan

Intermediate:

- Supervise Operations Section
- Determine need and requests additional resources
- Initiate demobilization of resources to carry out activities of Incident Action Plan to meet incident objectives
- Assemble, assign and or disassemble specialized Public Health Teams to Operations Section
- Report information about special activities, events, and occurrences to Incident Commander
- Monitor incident operations to identify current or potential inter-organizational problems

Extended:

- Participate in planning meetings, providing current resource status, including limitations and capability of assisting agency resources
- Prepare end of shift report and deliver to oncoming Operations Section Chief

PLANNING SECTION CHIEF

You report to: Incident Commander

Mission: The Planning Section is responsible for collecting and analyzing information and developing forecasts related to the incident. This information is used to develop the Incident Action Plan (IAP) and measure progress towards achieving the incident goal.

Immediate:

- Read this entire job action sheet and review Common Responsibilities sheet
- Obtain a full briefing regarding the incident (or report from off going Planning Section Chief)
- Brief and assign Planning Section personnel in accordance with the Incident Action

Intermediate:

- Collect and process information about the incident
- Provide input to the Incident Commander and Operations Section Chief in preparing the Incident Action Plan
- Establish information requirements and reporting schedules for Planning Section units
- Establish special information collection activities as necessary, e.g., weather, environmental, toxins, hospital or EMS surveillance data, etc.
- Assemble information on alternative strategies in support of the Incident Commander
- Provide periodic predictions regarding the incident potential for resolution or escalation
- Report any significant changes in incident status
- Compile and display incident status information
- Incorporate data collection plans for each section into the Incident Action Plan
- Report information about special activities, events and occurrences to the Incident Commander

Extended:

- Participate in planning meetings, providing current, up to date information that is required for establishing incident goal, incident action plan and assessing progress towards achieving the objectives
- Prepare end of shift report and deliver to oncoming Planning Section Chief
- Participate in planning meetings, providing current resource status, including limitations and capability of assisting agency resources
- Prepare end of shift report and deliver to oncoming Operations Section Chief

**EXAMPLE: Department of Health
Job Action Sheet**

[Print Page](#)

SAFETY OFFICER

Reports to: Incident Commander

Mission: Develop and recommend measures for assuring personnel safety (including psychological and physical), and to assess and/or anticipate hazardous and unsafe situations.

Immediate:

- Read this entire job action sheet
- Obtain a full briefing regarding the incident (or report from off going Safety Officer)
- Participate in planning meetings and review the Incident Action Plan for safety implications
- Appoint a person to be responsible for maintaining essential day to day services

Intermediate:

- Exercise emergency authority to stop and prevent unsafe acts
- Investigate accidents that have occurred within the incident area
- Review and approve Hazardous Materials Site Safety & Control Plan

Extended:

- Prepare end of shift report and deliver to oncoming Safety Officer



"Describe your functional role(s) in emergency response."

A functional role is a specific task or responsibility that you will perform to achieve a clear objective related to emergency response operations.

During emergency response, your functional role:

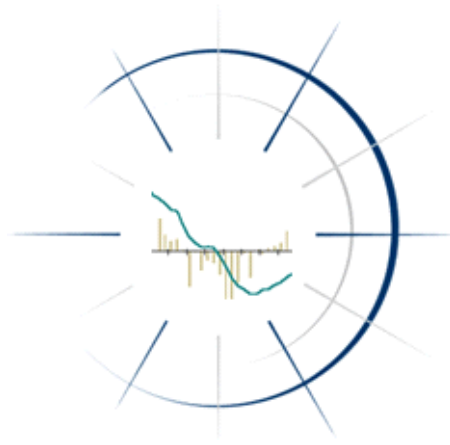
- may be the same or similar to what you do every day
- -or- may be a sub-set of what you do every day
- -or- may be different from what you usually do (but are competent to perform)
- -or- may be what is done every day, but by a different person

Some health departments use emergency response JOB ACTION SHEETS for each functional role in their emergency plan.

The pictures below show some examples of emergency response functional roles.



Chapter 5: Deviations from the Norm



Columbia University
MAILMAN SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC HEALTH



"Recognize deviations from the norm that might indicate an actual or impending emergency."

Deviations from the norm can be important warnings about actual or impending emergencies. Deviations can be detected in several ways:

- Formal surveillance systems, such as case reporting from hospitals and community based doctors
- A department of health employee may notice an unusual case or occurrence
- The department may be notified of an event from the news media or another agency

As a department of health employee, you should be alert for deviations from the norm and promptly report findings to your supervisor.



There are many infectious diseases designated as notifiable at the national level during 2002. These have to be routinely monitored by departments of health, and include:

- AIDS
- Anthrax
- Botulism
- Cholera
- Diphtheria
- Encephalitis
- Gonorrhea
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Lyme disease
- Measles
- Mumps
- Pertussis
- Plague
- Rubella
- Salmonellosis
- Typhoid fever
- Yellow fever

Click [here](#) for a complete list of all 67 infectious diseases designated as notifiable at the national level during 2002. This is an external document. (To return to this course, click on the X in the upper right hand corner of the other browser).





"Identify limits to your own knowledge / skills / authority and be able to identify key system resources for referring matters that exceed these limits."

Here are some examples of possible limits to a public health employee's skills or authority and some key system resources that they can refer these matters to.

It is important to know "what you do not know" and who / where to refer these matters to.

Limits to own skills or authority:

- communication with the media
- legal authority
- supervision of others
- allocation of resources
- clinical skills or decisions
- formulation of policies

Key System Resources:

- department information officer
- commissioner of health or agency director
- agency supervisor
- emergency operations / materials manager
- medical director
- commissioner of health or agency director



Effective emergency response requires communication on all levels.

Chapter 6: Communication





"Describe your communication role(s) in emergency response."

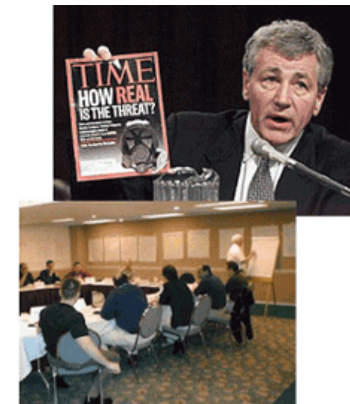
The most common problem cited with any public health emergency response is COMMUNICATION.

Communication is a key element of emergency response and occurs on many levels:

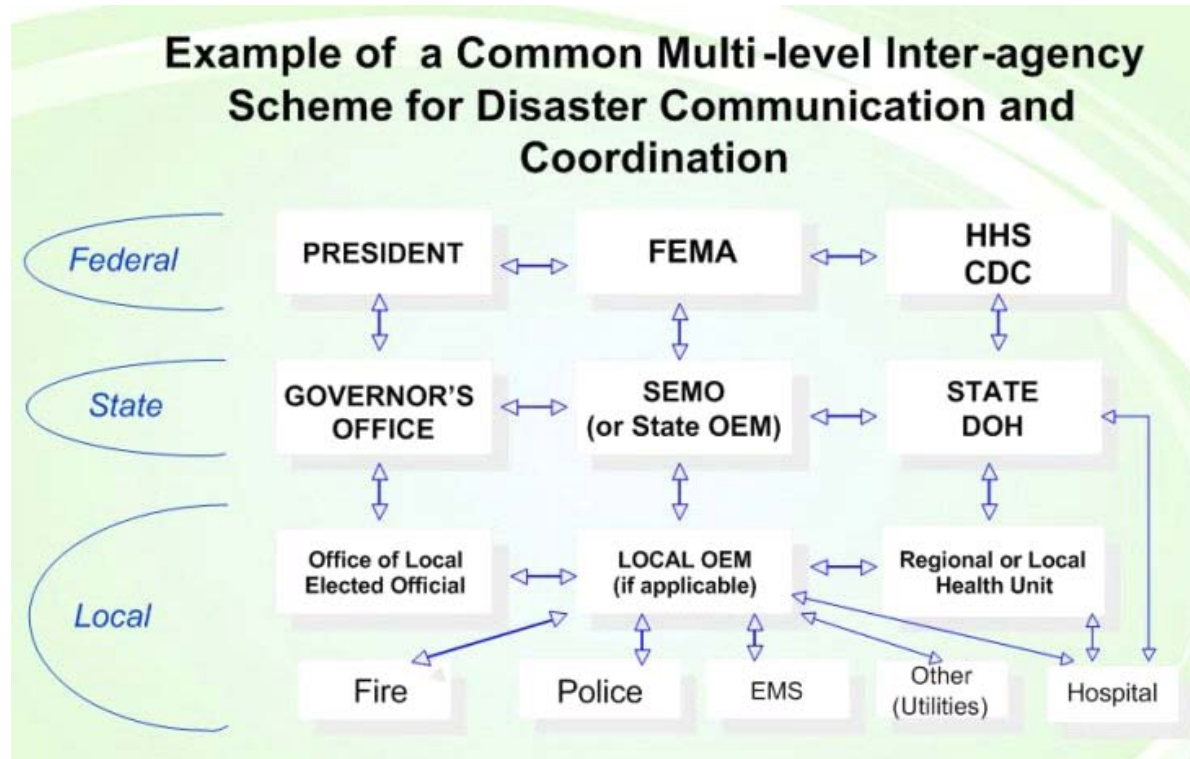
- Within the public health agency:** Communication through the chain of command will ensure that your information and requests for support get to the correct individual.
- Between agencies:** Timely, accurate information sharing between agencies is essential to ensure a coordinated emergency response.
- With the public:** As a public health employee, you represent public health to the community on a daily basis. Providing accurate information to the public is an essential service during emergency response.
- With the media:** Communication with the media can make or break the general public's perception of your agency's performance during the emergency response. The media has the ability to provide information to a large population in a short period of time.

The media can assist public health with providing public health messages. However, each agency member must know their role in relation to communicating with the media. *In most departments of health, only specific pre-designated individuals speak to the media.*

- On a personal level (family / significant others):** During an emergency, rapid communication with one's family is easier to accomplish if there is some pre-planning done. A personal emergency plan outlines the steps you would use to contact and make arrangements for your child, elder, or pet care.



During a disaster, many agencies need to communicate and cooperate to achieve an effective public health response. If you are unsure of any of the abbreviated names found below, you can move your mouse over the box to see the full name of the agency.





"Apply creative problem solving and flexible thinking to unusual challenges within functional roles & responsibilities and evaluate effectiveness of all actions taken."

During an emergency or disaster, response staff may have to be creative and improvise a method to achieve the goal.

Emergency situations are NOT operations as usual, and no plan can ever forecast every possible event. Therefore, each public health worker must be able to apply creative problem solving to unusual situations within the context of their agency's emergency response plan and the limits to their own authority.

Examples of situations which may require creative problem solving:

- Telephone system fails
- Expected supplies are not delivered
- Equipment malfunction

What type of unusual situations can you imagine affecting your department of health?





"Demonstrate correct use of all communication equipment used for emergency communication (phone, fax, radio, etc.)."

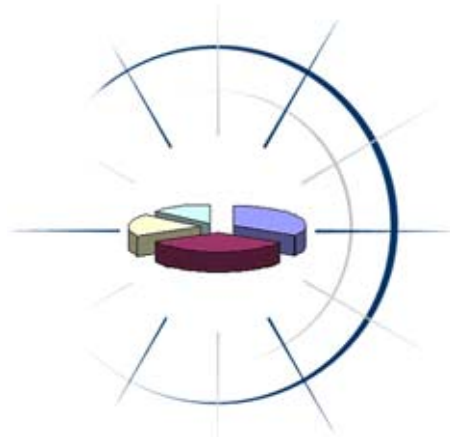
Sometimes during emergency response, you may be working in an unfamiliar office or setting and may have to use communication equipment that you are unfamiliar with. Do you know how to:

- Telephone:** dial out long distance or transfer a call?
- Fax:** operate the copier or group fax functions?
- Walkie Talkie:** send and receive communication?
- Email:** send group emails?
- Megaphone:** operate and change the batteries?
- Use of runners:** Who in the chain of command should you contact to make arrangements for a runner?
- Intercom system:** Can you operate your agency's intercom system?
- Digital camera:** Will you have to use a digital camera to instantly send photos to other agencies?

You should identify the communication equipment your agency is likely to use during an emergency and learn how to operate it before you need to use it.



Chapter 7: Evaluation



Evaluation of All Actions:

How would you evaluate the effectiveness of all actions you took?

Were the issues you referred to others acted upon?

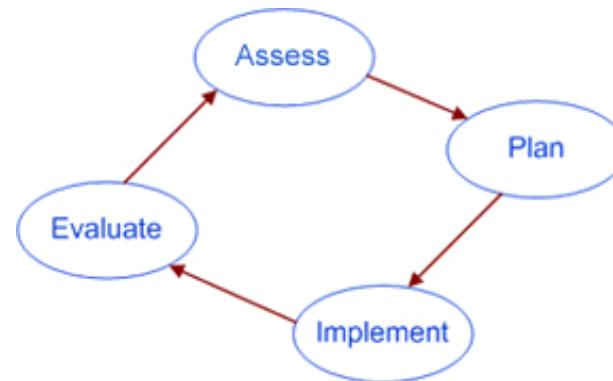
Was the issue that you addressed resolved?

Appropriate methods to evaluate a department of health's emergency preparedness capabilities is/are:

- review the agency's performance after a real event
- conduct an actual emergency drill
- performance of table top drills (using a hypothetical scenario)

Actions taken should be evaluated to see if they were effective. This starts the feedback loop of evaluating and revising your emergency response plan. Always remember to "close the loop." The situation may be hectic, and it is easy for another individual or department to become distracted, or not realize the urgency of your request or need.

If necessary, revise and re-evaluate your new plan.



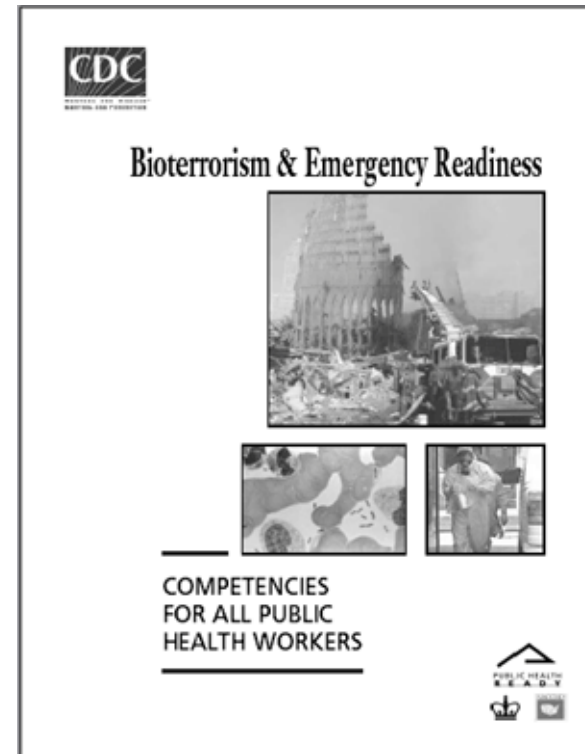
Follow up is essential. Once the emergency/disaster is over, all involved should provide feedback regarding how the plan worked. Think about what went well, and provide suggestions for additions or modifications to the plan.

Coordinated Efforts:

Effective public health emergency preparedness and response depends upon the coordinated efforts of multiple people from many different agencies working together. Remember, for public health to respond to emergencies and disasters, it must have:

- Core system capacities
- A well defined and practiced emergency response plan
- A workforce that understands the role of public health during emergency response, knows its agency's emergency plan, and is competent to perform the specific functional emergency response roles

Mastery of the Core Public Health Worker Emergency Preparedness and Response Competencies is the first step for building the public health emergency response capacity.



Congratulations!

You have reached the end of the course material for Part I. You can click on the link below to go to the post-test or use the left-hand side menu to review the course.

[Click here to go to the Post-test](#)

(After clicking on the link, this window will close.)